Analysis of Kurfis

**Issue**: What is the relationship between Perry’s scheme of intellectual development and Belenky and associate’s research on women perspectives, and how do both theories affect critical thinking instruction?

**Conclusions**:

1. The two scheme’s have complementary developmental stages. Perry’s scheme may more appropriately describe male intellectual development, which emphasizes objectivity (seeing), whereas Belenky’s scheme seems to describe female development that focuses on careful listening to discern different points of view and the reasons behind it.

2. Both schemes have implications for teaching critical thinking: instruction needs to take into account the students’ development level, sequencing the instruction accordingly if the goal is to both develop critical thinking skills and also help students move through the developmental stages.

**Reasons leading to conclusions.**

1. Both Perry and Belenky’s schemes are derived from extensive research.

The two models have a parallel relationship. Both have four stages, for example, and are arranged in a hierarchical sequence.

The differences between the two schemes seem to correlate with male emphasis on the mind and female emphasis on the heart. They may also reflect cultural emphases on how different gender children are raised and perceive gender roles in society.

2. Research shows that development of critical thinking skills may be a necessary, but insufficient element for intellectual development. It also shows a relationship between developmental levels and rhetorical skill, counseling skill, and moral reasoning.

Stage development characteristics can be related to classroom practices, including textbooks, assignments, evaluation criteria, and types of discussions.

Research shows that classroom instruction promotes development when it is organized for one level beyond the students’ present level.

Kurfis gives examples of how it might be possible to organize courses to address both Perry and Belenky’s developmental characteristics.